

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 pending in this application were originally submitted in this application. The Office Action of December 31, 2002, required the election of one of three claim groups, Groups I, II and III. In Applicant's Response, filed on January 31, 2003, Applicant elected, with traverse, Group I, corresponding to claims 1-11. However Applicant submitted that a search and examination of all the claims (1-24) would not impose a serious burden on the Examiner.

Section 803 of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure states that "[i]f the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine the entire application on the merits, *even though it includes claims to independent or distinct inventions.*" (emphasis added). Applicants submit that the present case falls squarely within this standard. No serious burden exists in this case since one search under the same classification and field of search would reveal art, if any, pertinent to the systems and methods of providing billing information as recited in claims 1-24.

In this Amendment, Applicant has amended claims 1-22 and claim 24, and added new claims 25-28, support for which can be found on page 21 of the specification. No new matter has been added. Applicant also submit that the newly added claims 25-28 fall within the standard of not creating a serious burden on the examiner, as stated in Section 803 of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure.

Upon entry of this Amendment and Response, there will be 28 total claims pending, with 6 independent claims (claims 1, 11, 12, 18, 24, and 25) and 19 dependant claims. Applicant originally filed and paid for 24 total claims, with 5 independent claims, and therefore the additional fee is enclosed.

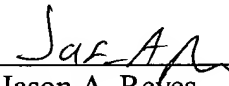
Applicant has also filed a Petition for Withdrawal of Abandonment on June 30, 2003, which is currently pending. Furthermore, on December 23, 2003, Applicant re-submitted its Response to the Restriction Requirement mailed from the U.S.P.T.O. on December 31, 2002 with the applicable documentation indicating a Response was filed in a timely manner, on January 31, 2003.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the claims in due course. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' attorney would be helpful, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' attorney at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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